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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003558

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SUNNI DEPUTY PM: THIS IS THE BEST POSSIBLE  
CONSTITUTION

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.  
4 (b) AND (d)

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: At an August 29 meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Abid Mutlak Al-Jaburi (a secular Sunni) thanked the Ambassador for the U.S. role in the constitution drafting process. He said that 90 percent of Iraqis would prefer to live in a secular state, and expressed confidence that Sunnis will participate in the upcoming elections. He asked for U.S. support against "external influences" that threaten the unity of Iraq. At the Ambassador's encouragement, Al-Jaburi said he would consider making a supportive public statement about the constitution, and would engage Shia and Kurdish leaders directly on means to increase Sunni support for the draft. END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (C) Deputy Prime Minister Al-Jaburi expressed appreciation for the Ambassador's efforts in support of the constitution drafting process. Al-Jaburi expressed his conviction that the draft constitution is the best possible at this time. He said the text represents a "midpoint" between different views--Sunni and Shia, Kurds and Arabs, Christians and Moslems. He joked that the Kurds probably got a better deal than the other communities, but agreed that the purpose of a constitution is to serve as a social contract, rather than a "political platform". He pledged to cooperate with efforts to promote the new draft's ratification. He said that he had already shared points in support of the constitution, from his August 28 meeting with PolCouns, with the Association of Moslem Scholars, urging them to support Sunni political engagement. He expressed confidence that Sunni participation in the upcoming elections will be high.

[13](#). (C) Al-Jaburi said that 90 percent of Iraqis prefer a secular, liberal state, and attributed the success of the United Shia List in the January 2005 elections to Ayatollah Sistani's support. He said he can support federalism, even two entities--one Kurd, one Arab. However, he said, he objects to federalism based on "sectarianism or racism." He requested U.S. support for Iraqi unity, adding that "if you want Iraqis to unite, keep away external influences."

[14](#). (C) The Ambassador reaffirmed that the U.S. is committed to a united Iraq, and views federalism as the best way to keep the country together. He said that adjustments to the Constitution remain possible prior to the referendum and encouraged Al-Jaburi to engage Kurd and Shia leaders directly on means to increase Sunni support for the draft and participation in the political process.

[15](#). (C) Al-Jaburi said that the Sunni community is "less afraid now", adding that some Sunni tribes are actually fighting insurgents. He welcomed the Coalition's August 24-27 release of 1,000 detainees from the Abu Ghraib prison as a constructive signal to Sunnis. At the same time, he asked the Ambassador for assistance with Sunni complaints over Iraqi Security Forces and lack of adequate voter registration facility access and security. He asked the Ambassador to continue to encourage moderation among the Shia and Kurds. In response to the Ambassador's request, he said he would consider making a statement on the draft Constitution encouraging Sunnis to take a constructive approach to the new Constitution and avoid making emotional statements.  
Khalilzad